



Knocking at the College Door

Projections of High School Graduates

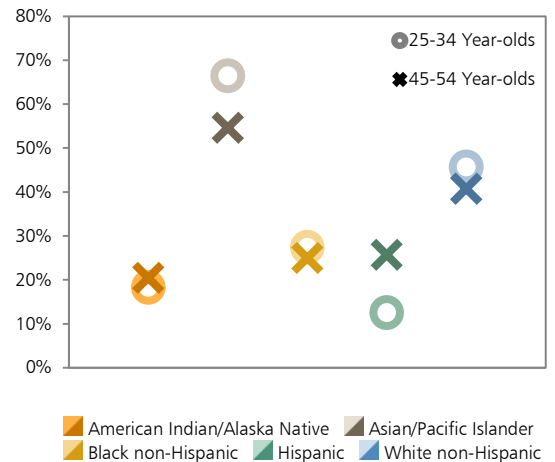
NORTH CAROLINA

National and regional trends mask important variation among states in the supply of high school graduates. This profile provides brief indicators for North Carolina related to: current levels of educational attainment, our projections of high school graduates into the future, and two common barriers to student access and success – insufficient academic preparation and inadequate finances.

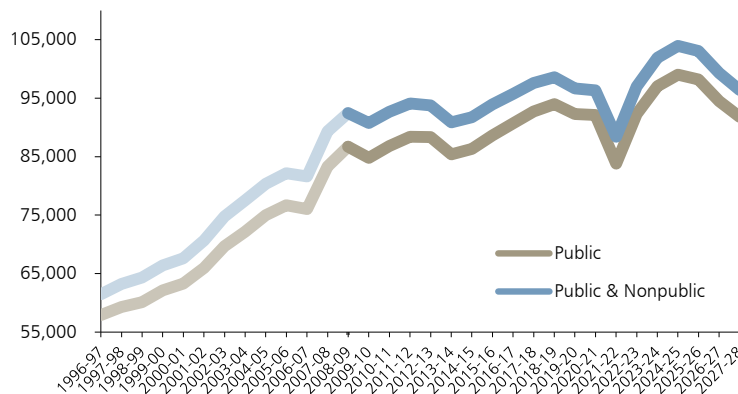
Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity¹

Workforce projections indicate there will be a growing demand for well-educated labor, which means that younger adults need to be as well as or more educated than older adults given how much longer they will need to be employed. Data about adults ages 25-34 and 45-54 in North Carolina with postsecondary degrees between 2008 and 2010 indicate that overall, younger and older adults are about as likely to have a postsecondary degree, 37.6% for younger adults and 36.8% for older.

- Only 13% of 25-34 year-old Hispanic adults in North Carolina held a postsecondary degree, 13 percentage points less than the 26% among 45-54 year-olds. Younger American Indian/Alaska Native adults were also slightly less likely to have a degree, 18.3% compared to 20.5% among older adults.
- More young Asian/Pacific Islander adults had a postsecondary degree than their older counterparts, 67% compared to 55%, respectively. About 46% of younger White non-Hispanic adults have a postsecondary degree compared to 41% of older White non-Hispanic adults.



Production of High School Graduates



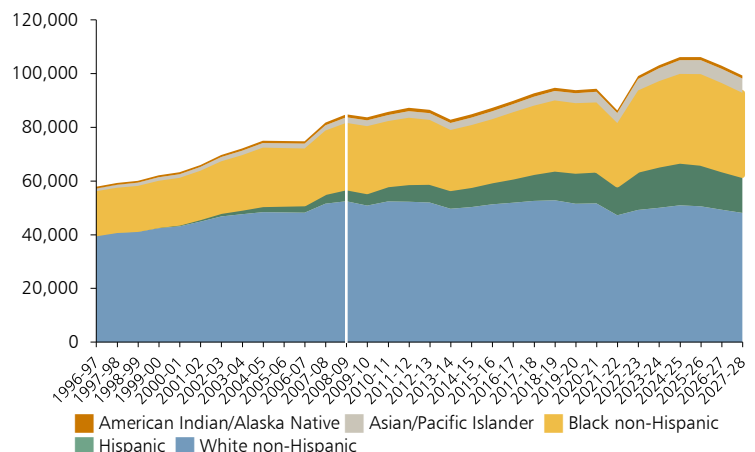
Our projections indicate that North Carolina reached a high of 94,100 graduates with the class of 2012 after consistent growth for most of the past two decades. The state is projected to now be in a brief slump that will last through 2015-16, followed by a period of growth with graduating classes at new highs between 95,000 and 98,600 through 2020-21. North Carolina's graduating class will surpass 100,000 graduates for several years between 2023-24 and 2025-26, before dropping back in the last projected years.

North Carolina produced 5,700 nonpublic high school graduates in 2008-09, 7% of the total, but by 2027-28 nonpublic graduates will drop to 4,600, only 5% of the total.

Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

All of North Carolina's projected growth in public graduates will come from non-White graduates.

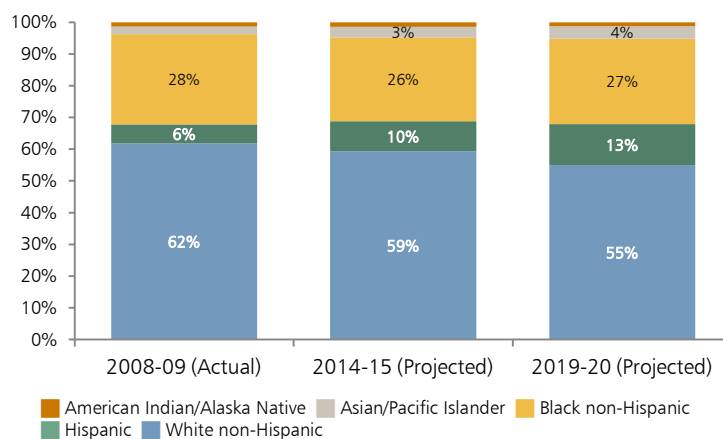
- White non-Hispanic graduate numbers will be relatively flat with small variations through the projected period, ending at about 48,000 by 2027-28.
- Black non-Hispanic graduate numbers will hover between 22,000 and 25,000 through 2021-22, after which there will be several years of rapid growth with Black non-Hispanic graduates projected to rise above 30,000.
- Hispanic graduate numbers will triple, from 5,000 in 2008-09 to almost 16,500 by 2025-26.
- The number of Asian/Pacific Islander graduates more than doubles, from 2,100 in 2008-09 to 5,300 by 2027-28.



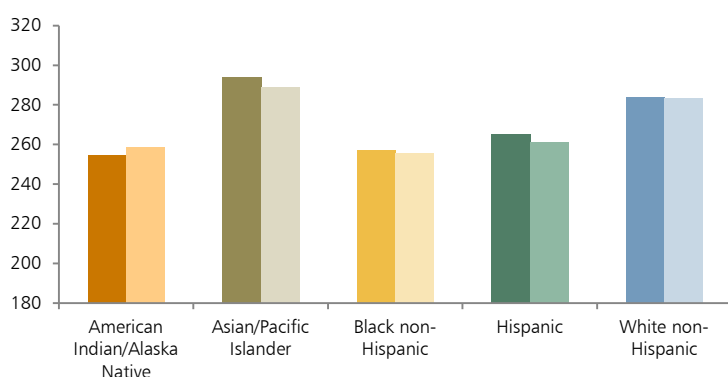
Composition of Public High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

More than a third (38%) of North Carolina's public high school graduates were non-White in 2008-09. Projected growth in the number of non-White graduates combined with declines in White non-Hispanic graduates indicates that North Carolina will become 'majority minority' by 2022-23 and successive graduating classes will all be above 50% non-White.

- Black non-Hispanics will increase from 28% to 31% of public high school graduates from 2008-09 to 2027-28, despite declining in share through 2021-22.
- Hispanics will rise from 6% of the total in 2008-09 to 16% in 2024-25.
- Asians/Pacific Islanders will increase from 2% to 5% the total throughout the projections.



Composite Math and Reading Scores by Race/Ethnicity²



Note: North Carolina in darker shades; U.S. in lighter shades.

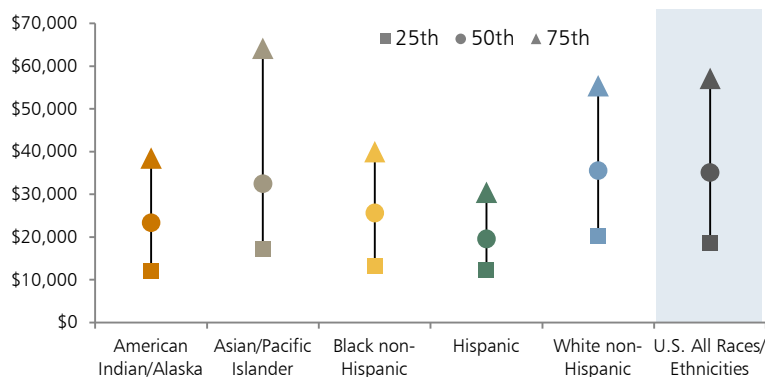
Academic preparation is a major factor in college access and success, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provides some measure of differences by race/ethnicity.

- The average composite math and reading score across race/ethnicities for eighth graders in North Carolina in 2011 ranged from 255 for American Indians/Alaska Natives to 294 for Asians/Pacific Islanders.
- Hispanics' average composite score of 265 was almost 20 points less than for White non-Hispanics, and American Indian/Alaska Natives' and Black non-Hispanics' scores were even lower.
- Hispanics in the state outperformed their peers nationally.

Annual Income by Race/Ethnicity³

A second major barrier is access to the financial resources needed to pay for college. Among working-age adults (25-64) in North Carolina from 2006 to 2010, the statewide median income was \$31,326, 90% of the national median income of \$35,147.

Hispanics were the least well off financially among all races/ethnicities with a median income of \$19,594, 56% of the statewide median, and one in four Hispanics earning \$12,192 or less. American Indians/Alaska Natives and Black non-Hispanics were also concentrated toward the bottom of the statewide income spectrum, and therefore relatively worse off financially compared to national income levels.



Projections of high school graduates are from WICHE, *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*, 2012. 1996-97 to 2008-09 are actual reported graduates and 2009-10 to 2027-28 are projections. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems supplied the data used in the first and last figures. State-level estimates for those figures are only reported for a racial/ethnic group when the coefficients of variation for all estimates do not exceed 25% and sample size is 50 or greater. Readers should understand that estimates for small samples can be imprecise due to large standard errors. WICHE provides relevant data tables at <http://wiche.edu/knocking-8th/technicalNotes>.

¹Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-10 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File. Average annual percent of population aged 25-34 and 45-54 with an Associate's degree or higher in 2008-10.

²Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2009 and 2011 Mathematics and Reading Assessments, generated using the NAEP Data Explorer. <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>. Notes: Composite scores are the average of the Math and Reading scores for 8th graders tested in 2011, scale of 0 to 500; scores for 12th graders taking NAEP were not available for this state.

³Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-10 American Community Survey Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample File. Note: Percentiles for wage/salary income were calculated for persons age 25-64 with positive earnings; unemployed persons with \$0 income were also included. Figures are in 2010 dollars. Native Hawaiians are included in Asian/Pacific Islander.

For more information email knocking@wiche.edu or contact Peace Bransberger, Research Analyst, 303.541.0257, pbransberger@wiche.edu, or Brian Prescott, Director of Policy Research, 303.541.0255, bprescott@wiche.edu. Visit <http://wiche.edu/knocking> to obtain the full publication and download these projections as [graphs](#) or [data files](#).